

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are pending in this application. Claim 1 is the only pending independent claim. By this amendment, claims 3-5 are amended for clarity to correct minor informalities contained therein without narrowing the scope thereof, and claims 8 and 9 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer thereto.

Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully solicited.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 1-7 over the art of record.

Bearing in mind the comments in Official Action regarding the allowability of claims 1-7, the present application is amended so as to place it into condition for allowance by amending the claims accordingly. An early indication of the same would be greatly appreciated.

The Claims Objections Are Obviated

The Office Action objects to claims 3-5 and 8-9 for minor informalities contained therein. This objection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to claims 3-5 obviates the objection of the claims. Furthermore, the objection to claims 8 and 9 is moot in light of the cancellation of claims 8 and 9.

Appl. No.: 10/684,449  
Docket No.: 0020-5186P  
January 18, 2005  
Art Unit: 2816  
Page 9 of 10

Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to claims 3-5 and 8-9 is respectfully solicited.

Rejection of Claims 8 and 9 Is Moot

The Office Action rejects claims 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,087,829 to Ishibashi et al. (hereafter Ishibashi). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully submit that the 102(b) rejection under Ishibashi is moot in light of the cancellation of claims 8 and 9.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully solicited.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Carolyn T. Baumgardner (Reg. No. 41,345) at (703) 205-8000 to schedule a Personal Interview.

Appl. No.: 10/684,449  
Docket No.: 0020-5186P  
January 18, 2005  
Art Unit: 2816  
Page 10 of 10


If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment from or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. §1.17; particularly, the extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,  
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By

  
Terrell C. Birch, #19,382

P.O. Box 747  
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747  
(703) 205-8000

  
TCB/CTB/mpe  
0020-5186P